value-added items so that our people are also provided with employment opportunities and the Government gets enriched to some extent.

PROF. RAM KAPSE: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the hon. Minister has specifically told us that the interest of the cotton growers would be safeguarded. As far as cotton-growers are concerned, I would like to tell the Minister that the Government of Maharashtra is taking special interest for years. So, I would like to know from the Minister whether the scheme which has been extended to Maharashtra every two years would be given to it permanently. I would also like to know from the Minister whether a special quota would be allotted to Maharashtra taking into consideration the interest of farmers of Mahrashtra for the export purpose.

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I do not want to go into the merits and demerits of the scheme extended to Maharashtra. I would rather suggest to the Government of Maharashtra to see that both the quality of cotton and the production of cotton per hectare are also improved. Sir, I cannot assure the hon. Member that this scheme would be extended to the Government of Maharashtra on a permanent basis. We have extended the scheme by two years. We would watch their performance. If necessary, we would certainly extend it.

Last year also we allowed exports for Maharashtra. This year also we have already given 1,00,000 bales to be exported. In addition to that, we have also allowed Maharashtra to export the backlog quantity till the end of this month.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Q. Nos. 64 and 67 would be taken up together because both the questions deal with the same subject.

भूमध्य सागर में समुद्री जहाज में यात्रा कर रहे भारतीयों का मारा जाना

\$*64. श्री ईश दत्त यादवः†
श्रीमती मालती शर्माः

क्या विदेश मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे किः

(क) क्या सरकार को 25 दिसम्बर, 1996 को ग्रीस के निकट भूमध्य सागर में हुई दुर्घटना की जानकारी है जिसमें कुछ भारतीय मारे गये थे;

(ख) यदि हां, तो कितने भारतीय मारे गये और उसके क्या कारण थे तथा उन व्यक्तियों के नाम क्या हैं जिनका इस घटना में हाथ था;

(ग) क्या सरकार ने इस दुर्घटना की कोई जांच करायी है और दोषी पाये गये व्यक्तियों के विरुद्ध कोई कार्यवाही की है; और

(घ) सरकार ने इस दुर्घटना में मारे गये व्यक्तियों के आश्रितों/परिवारजनों की मदद करने हेतु क्या कार्यवाही की है?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) (a) to (d): A statement is laid on the table of the Rajya Sabha.

Statement

Our Ambassador in Athens reported on 7th January, 1997 of the sinking of a ship on Christmas night, carrying Indian nationals amongst others, in the Malta-Sicily channel. The number of Indians reportedly drowned is about 175, though no trace of bodies or wreckage of the boat has been recovered so far. Estimate of those drowned including their identification is based on the evidences given by 22 survivors who were apprehended and deported to India. 39 Indians are reported to have escaped arrest. Their where abouts are still not known.

The names of persons who are believed to have been perished in the accident is at statement-I (*See* below). On receipt of the list of persons who are believed to

\$ तारांकित प्रश्न संख्या 64 तथा 67 को साथ-साथ लिया गया।

†सभा में यह प्रश्न श्री ईश दत्त यादव द्वारा पूछा गया।

have died, the concerned Passport Offices were asked to contact the next of kin through their records. Indian missions at Rome, Malta and Athens were alerted for assistance from contiguous countries in recovery of the bodies. Travel documents were issued to the 22 survivors who had been detained in Greece to enable them to return to India. A notice was immediately put out by Government in newspapers giving the names of the survivors. Telephone numbers of officers in the Ministry of External Affairs and the Passport Offices were also publicized to enable the next of kin/families of survivors to contact Government for assistance. Family members of suspected missing and deceased got in touch with Regional Passport Office, Chandigarh and Passport Office, Jallandhar to give information about the agents, and, to obtain details about the identity of suspected missing and deceased.

On receipt of the report of the accident, Government immediately ordered a CBI inquiry.

While some arrests have been made, the CBI inquiry is still in progress. Based on this inquiry, further necessary action will be taken in this regard.

Statement-I

List of those Suspected Dead in the Ship Accident Drawn up Based on Survivors 'Testimony'

1. Parmender Singh
2. Gurmail Singh
3. Amrik Singh Sidhpur
4. Karnail Singh
5. Rajinder Singh
6. Basis Singh
7. Raghuvir Singh Chahal
8. Raja Nayian Da Munda
9. Swakhan Singh
10. Kala
11. Ajit Singh
12. Avtar Singh
13. Palwander Singh Bindi
14. Joginderpal
15. Kuldeep Singh
16. Gurumukh Singh
17. Nikku
18. Gurwinder Singh
19. Amarjit Singh
20. Satham Singh
21. Satbir Singh
22. Jagtar Singh Uppal
23. Balwant Singh
24. Ranjit Singh
25. Hardev Singh
26. Sital Singh
27. Kapur Singh
28. Bhupinder Singh
29. Satnam Singh
30. Sukhvir Singh
31. Rajwinder
32. Bittu
33. Kulwinder Singh
34. Ajit Singh
35. Daljit Singh
36. Harjit Singh
37. Kulwinder Singh
38. Ajit Singh Lamber
39. Sukhdev Singh Bittoo
40. Bashria
41. Gurjit Singh
42. Jaswant Singh Sarpanch
43. Amrik Singh
44. Manjit Singh
45. Kulwinder Singh
46. Amrik Singh
47. Dalbir Singh
48. Tejinder Singh
49. Makhan Singh
50. Chanchal
51. Rinku
52. Tarsem Lal
53. Harmesh Chander
54. Bittoo
55. Mangaljit Singh
56. Sukhdev Singh
57. Jagwant Kumar
58. Rutjaan Satiagion Da Munda
59. Baldev Raj alias Debi
60. Name not known (One boy from Phuglana who recently came from Saudi Arabia)
61. Choohar Singh
62. Paramjit
63. Jagtar Singh Jangi
64. Harbhajan Singh
65. Jasbir Singh

66. Harish Kumar
67. Dalip Singh
68. Billa V.
69. Bira
70. Pamma
71. Rana Loharonda Munda
72. Joga Singh
73. Tarsem
74. Jeeti Karkharan
75. Karnail Singh Kookarpind
76. Ramesh Kumar Lada
77. Man Singh
78. Binda Tervinder Singh
79. Pamma-Paramjeet Singh

Assistnce to Survivors of the Sinking Ship by Indian Embassy in Anthens

†*67. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian survivors of the ship that recently sank in the Malta-Sicily Channel had approached the Indian Embassy in Athens for help;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the nature of the assistance provided by the Indian Embassy in Athens to the survivors of the tragedy?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJARAL): (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha.

Statement

On receiving reports of a collision at sea between two ships in the Malta-Sicily channel, on January 7, 1997 our Embassy in Athens approached Greek authorities for authentic information about the number of Indian arrested, escaped or perished in the collision. The Embassy separately made enquiries and established contact with the Indian survivors, who were detained at Nafplion, Greece. The Embassy officials met the 22 survivors, and commenced steps to confirm their citizenship and issue Emergency Certificates to them to facilitate their return to India. The 22 survivors were deported by Greek authorities and reached India on January 25, 1997.

The Indian Embassy in Athens maintained constant contact with the Greek authorities both to monitor the progress of deportation proceedings, as well as, to ensure that the survivors were not put to unnecessary hardship, having already suffered the trauma of the maritime tragedy. The Embassy also maintained continuous contact with the Ministry of External Affairs conveying the names of survivors, addresses of their next of kin, names of those suspected to have perished, which were passed on to the field offices i.e. Regional Passport Office, Chandigarh and Passport Office, Jallandhar to enable expeditious dissemination of correct information to the next of kin. The Indian Ambassador also visited the detention center at Nafplion and met the survivors. The survivors being under detention in Greece, their immediate welfare and deportation was looked after by the Greek authorities, with which the Embassy officials maintained close liaison.

श्री ईश दत्त यादव: मान्यवर सभापति जी, 25 दिसम्बर 1996 को माल्टा-सिसिली चैनल में भयंकर जहाज दुर्घटना हुई जिसमें सरकार के अनुसार 175 भारतीय मारे गए और उस जहाज में दूसरे देशों के लोग भी सवार थे, जो मरे हैं। लेकिन इस मामले में विदेश मंत्री जी का जो उत्तर आया मुझे लगता है कि सरकार इस विषय में बहुत गंभीर नहीं है, क्योंकि इस घटना को दो महीने हो गए और जो उत्तर उन्होंने दिया है उसमें यह कहा गया है कि इसमें 175 लोग मरे और ऐसा विश्वास है कि फलां-फलां लोग जिनकी सूची दी गई है वह मरे हैं। तो इतनी भयंकर घटना के प्रति भी सरकार गंभीर नहीं है और आज तक सरकार को निश्चित पता नहीं चल सका कि 39 आदमी जो जीवित बचे हैं, 22 तो वापिस आ गए, लेकिन जो 39 व्यक्ति बचे हैं वे किस परिस्थितियों में हैं, कहां पर हैं? इसके बारे में सरकार ने कोई पता नहीं लगाया, इनके उत्तर से यह लगता है।

इस प्रश्न के पार्ट-घ में हम लोगों ने यह जानना चाहा था कि जो लोग मर गए हैं उनके परिवार को सरकार ने क्या आर्थिक सहायता दी? इस प्रश्न का तो

†Starred Question Nos. 64 & 67 were taken up together.